

Gun registry keeps guns out of hands of dangerous people

The Sault Star
November 4, 2009

Opposition leaders claim their hands are tied. Sadly they cannot stop their MPs from helping the Conservatives pass Bill C-391, which eliminated the need to register rifles and shotguns and requires that the records on more than seven million guns already registered be destroyed. NDP Leader Jack Layton, founder of the white ribbon campaign, says he must allow a free vote on this bill because it is a private members bill. Just a few short months ago, both he and Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff made impassioned speeches supporting gun control and their MPs voted to pass a Bloc Quebecois motion supporting the registry. But this is a private member's bill in name only. The Conservative government is firmly behind it. The prime minister called on groups like the Ontario Anglers and Hunters and enlisted the help of his former employer, the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation. The Conservative Party of Canada has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on a U. S.-style media campaign targeting specific opposition MPs and bragging about it. Hiding behind the fiction that this is just a vote to "study the bill" does not work either. A vote on a second reading is a vote to support in principle. Period. Just weeks shy of the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, it seems that the Opposition leaders will help Stephen Harper pass this law -- a law which the parents of the Polytechnique victims called a monument to the memory of their daughters killed that day. In spite of the problems with implementation, the firearms registry is used 10,000 times a day, has helped remove guns from dangerous people and solved crimes. My son, Aidan Lumley, was shot and killed three years ago with a handgun, but victims of gun violence know that a rifle or shotgun in the wrong hands kill just as dead as a handgun. If Bill C-391 passes and becomes law, we will be compromised. A few weeks ago, in a closed meeting, the prime minister claimed he needed a majority so he could follow through on his promises to dismantle the registry. But he does not need a majority. He just needs the help of Mr. Layton and Mr. Ignatieff. And it looks like he will get it. The gun registry does work.

Elaine Lumley, Toronto, Ont.